

Break My Heart Again by Thetolwrits

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Alternate Universe - Everyone Lives/Nobody Dies, Alternate Universe - Modern Setting, Billy Hargrove & Maxine "Max" Mayfield Bonding, Billy Hargrove & Maxine "Max" Mayfield Have a Good Relationship, Bisexual Steve Harrington, Breaking Up & Making Up, Brotherly Steve Harrington & Dustin Henderson, Everyone Needs A Hug, Gay Billy Hargrove, Good Sibling Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Homophobia, Internalized Homophobia, M/M, Protective Dustin Henderson, Steve Harrington is a Sweetheart

Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Dustin Henderson, Heather Holloway, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Original Child Character(s), Robin Buckley, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington, Robin Buckley/Heather Holloway

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2020-04-10

Updated: 2021-03-11

Packaged: 2022-04-01 13:33:58

Rating: Mature

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 4

Words: 7,639

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Billy is happy. He has a great job, his own house and a dog. He doesn't go back to Hawkins, Indiana... ever. So, that's why he was so shocked to see Steve Harrington after all these years. It's definitely not because he was still in love with his highschool sweetheart.

Steve is stressed, but he's happy. He works two jobs that he loves, rents the same apartment that he's had since he was twenty-three and... he adopted a kid. He goes back to Hawkins, Indiana sometimes. He was still shocked to see Billy Hargrove after all these years. It's definitely not because he was still in love with his

highschool sweetheart.

1. You Were Good To Me

Author's Note:

Three things :

1. This first chapter is sad so here we go!
2. I made a playlist for this fic! Listen to it here!! : <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0WQza26ZOSqomhfN5CqNmT?si=-q-Ki-hZRiOaNtS51tc9Aw>
3. The fic has a sorta weird timeline. Chapter one takes place in 2011 and the rest of the story will take place in 2020, but like not our shitty quarantine 2020.

If you ask Billy Hargrove when he and Steve started dating he couldn't give you a straight answer. He might say, at some point between all the fighting and bullying, it became flirting and fucking. When they started officially dating? Billy didn't know if they even *were officially dating. Sure, they spent a lot of time together, were constantly kissing or having sex. Billy knew all of Steve's little quirks. Steve had broken down his walls, and he'd like to say that Steve knew him pretty damn well too. They'd been "together" for about a year he would guess.*

Billy knew he wasn't an easy person to be around. He liked it like that. He made himself like that. It hurt less when people left if he pretended he didn't care. Steve Harrington just did something to Billy. He made him go soft, made him spill how he was feeling, made him check his phone every five seconds for a text from him. Steve made Billy go from sending only sexy texts to the dorky ones where he's using emoticons and going on rants about how cute otters are. Steve just knew Billy. He knew Billy was full of bullshit the moment they started talking. He saw straight through him and dug himself a nice little home into the last caring piece of Billy's soul. Billy wanted to hate it, but he couldn't bring himself to hate anything about Steve.

He couldn't hate the smell of the expensive lavender body wash Steve

always uses. He couldn't hate the way Steve's hair falls into his eyes when it hasn't been styled, the way his eyes light up every time he sees Billy, the way he laughs like he's trying to keep it a secret, the way he smiles against Billy's lips every time he kisses him goodnight. Billy can't even hate Steve when he's mad. Even when Steve pokes his finger into his chest and tells Billy that he's bullshit, spouting words that weren't from Steve's mouth. Billy might get mad, but he could never hate Steve.

Their relationship was good. Life was far from perfect, but Billy was okay. He had Steve, so he was going to be okay. Steve was his anchor when his world got flipped upside down or whenever he started feeling just a bit too overwhelmed and it was nice, letting himself rely on someone. He knew that Steve would always have his back. Steve knew all of his darkest secrets. Steve was the one Billy would run to in the middle of the night when his face hurt and he was scared of being alone. Steve was the one that Billy gave his mom's necklace to when Neil had threatened to break it. It made his heart skip a beat every time Steve took off his shirt and there was his cross, in the middle of a chest that was normally marked up with bites and hickeys. Steve Harrington was beautiful. Steve Harrington was beautiful and kind, and Billy Hargrove did not deserve him. Billy Hargrove was mean and angry. Billy Hargrove was impulsive and destructive. Steve stayed with him anyway. Billy Hargrove has never been in love before, but he's starting to think... this might be love.

It all came crashing down one night as the two were laying side by side on the hood of the Camaro. They'd been passing a joint back and forth, sharing kisses between hits as they listened to Coldplay and the sounds of the peaceful summer night surrounding them. It was starting to get closer to the end of August, meaning Billy had his senior year and Steve... they didn't know what Steve was going to do yet. Steve suddenly sits up, looking at Billy nervously before he takes a big hit off the joint and looks back into the woods. "So uh... I... I have to tell you something."

Billy tries not to show how fucking nervous that made him. His stomach dropped to his shoes like a rock, and his body was tensed, resisting the urge to run away from his problems. "Yeah? What is it, princess?" He tried to sound nonchalant as he looked over at his boyfriend. His voice still sounded forced and he could feel his heart beating so fast. Steve

smiles at him sweetly, leaning over to give him a soft kiss. Billy allowed it to comfort him as he ran his fingers through Steve's ridiculously soft hair.

"I got into Bloomington..." Steve whispers against his lips and Billy feels his heart clench in his chest. He was happy, he'd spent hours and hours helping Steve study and apply to colleges. It was just... Bloomington was three hours away. Three hours was... a long drive when they both had classes and Billy had a dad that was constantly down his throat. Neil wouldn't let him drive 30 minutes away to go watch a fucking movie, he definitely wouldn't let him drive three hours to go visit his boyfriend. Billy smiles anyway, kisses Steve's neck as he mumbles. "That's amazing, baby. I'm so proud of you."

Steve lets out a little giggle, moaning softly as Billy decides to make one of the marks on his jugular that much darker. "Yeah, I have an orientation in two weeks." Billy pauses, looking away as he nods. "Oh." Steve blinks, placing a hand on Billy's cheek, he lets himself relax into the touch, cherishing it for as long as he could. Steve frowns, stroking his thumb against Billy's bottom lip as he leans their foreheads together. "What's going on in that big ole brain of yours, big guy?"

Billy sighs. "It's just. God, Steve I don't know. I thought you decided that you were coming to Cali with me? What happened there?" Steve raises an eyebrow. "Baby. I am going to Cali with you. I'm going to transfer." Billy feels himself tensing, anger filling him like a tightening coil as he pulls away and scoffs. "Sure. Because you're going to wait a whole year for me."

Steve's eyes narrow as he frowns. "Of course I will? What are you talking about Billy?" Billy groans and lays back on the hood. "You're not going to wait a whole fucking year when there are other people to fuck in Bloomington!" Steve lets out a soft noise of shock. "Oh fuck off, Hargrove. That's not all that our relationship is and you fucking know it!"

Billy growls, standing up and pacing away from his car. "So?! It doesn't fucking matter. You know I can't go to fucking Bloomington right now! My dad is down my fucking throat as it is! We're never gonna see each

other!" Steve shakes his head. "What about me, Billy?! What am I supposed to do?! Just fucking sit here and wait?! I'm not working another fucking year at goddamn Family Video and let my dad step on my balls for being in his house for another year! I have to do something!"

Billy sighs and shakes his head. "Fuck! I guess this is it then huh?! Christ. You're so fucking selfish." Steve scoffs, looking at Billy in shock. "I'M SELFISH?! Are you fucking kidding me?!" Billy groans as he feels that familiar itch to punch something until his knuckles bleed. Steve suddenly shoves Billy hard, and he almost falls, stumbling as Steve gets in his face. "I thought you would be excited for me! Happy for me! I have no fucking problem driving home to see you! I don't care, you act like... you act like you don't care about me at all unless it's convenient." Steve looks at him deep in his eyes, brown irises welling up with tears.

"Do you even care about me at all?" Steve whispers into the humid night air, the cicadas and katydids called out into the night air. His voice sounded so hurt... he sounded like it was already over whenever they had two more weeks together. There was a storm gathering in the distance and Billy could just feel the electricity in the air. He could see a lightning strike in the distance behind Steve's head as it suddenly begins to rain. They came out to the quarry to fuck, not to talk about this. Everything would be so peaceful, so perfect if they just weren't talking about this. "Do you even want to try? You sound like you're just giving up!"

Billy bites his lip, glaring at Steve. Before compelling himself to just not give a shit. Steve was leaving! He was leaving him just like everyone else and he doesn't give a fuck anymore. Fuck Steve Harrington and fuck everything he stands for. He wouldn't show Steve how much he was hurting. "No! I don't! You're fucking leaving, Steve! You're leaving and I'm going back to Cali and there's just no fucking way any of this is going to work! Us pretending it will is fucking stupid! You're gonna find some other guy or a girl in Bloomington and I... I don't know. What do you want from me, Steve? You were just some easy fuck and now I don't want to drive fucking three hours to get some ass. It's stupid." He spits out, every word with venom Those beautiful brown doe eyes started tearing up and Billy felt like a fucking monster. It made him mad. He knew he was saying some stupid shit, but he couldn't just shut his mouth. "This is

fucking dumb. We both know this wasn't a relationship. We were just fucking. I... I have to go."

He steps away from Steve, stepping back toward his car. He wanted nothing more than to just retreat into his shell of bravado where he doesn't have to give a shit about anything. Where he hates fucking everything in this goddamn hick town and nothing matters until he gets home, back to Cali. He doesn't care about anyone. He only looks out for himself and everyone else can get fucked. He doesn't give a shit about soft brown hair and bright red cheeks that had tears streaming slowly down flawless pale skin.

He refuses to look at Steve as he hears him choke out a sob, forcing himself to open his car door. "Billy. Don't fucking do this. You don't get to just DO this! You don't get to make me trust you and care about you, and then the moment it gets tough you just fucking give up! You don't get to make me fall in love with you just so you can leave! Do you hear me?! I fucking love you, Billy!"

Billy feels a cruel laugh bubble up from deep in his chest. He felt the poison enter his smile as he looks at Steve. He was breathtakingly beautiful, even crying with a runny nose and bright red cheeks, Steve Harrington was fucking gorgeous. Billy knew he loved him. "Well, I don't and I never will. You were just some prissy bitch for me to fuck and now I'm bored. So... good luck in Bloomington, Steve."

He got into the Camaro without another word, slamming the door so hard it shook the entire frame. His tires squealed as he ripped out of his parking spot and onto the road. He was going ninety miles an hour in the blink of an eye.

Billy didn't look back as he felt hot tears roll down his cheeks, no one heard his sobs that night except for the wildlife of Hawkins, Indiana.

2. Hello My Old Heart

Summary for the Chapter:

Billy is quick to leave Hawkins and everything from high school in the past. Sometimes the past decides not to stay there.

Steve tried to talk to Billy for weeks after that. Even after he moved to Bloomington, he would call him every single day. He even showed up to his house a couple times, which was **STUPID**, but Billy refused to acknowledge him at all. It was easier like this. It was easier for both of them to move on if Steve was completely dead to him. He went on dates. He went to parties. He threw himself into his schoolwork and into working out. He fucked guys that meant nothing to him. He fucked girls that meant even less.

Billy was a ghost of himself for months. He didn't feel like himself until he made a promise to himself one night, after crying in the mirror, that he was never going to fall in love again. The only thing love was good for was breaking your heart and leaving you even more fucked up than you were before. Billy made a plan that night, and he stuck to it. He got a job, saved up some money, got into a college in Cali on a scholarship and got the fuck out of Neil's house. Even managed to throw a final "Fuck you" to Neil as a farewell. He didn't see Steve Harrington again. He didn't care. He didn't look back. The only thing he had to do with Hawkins, Indiana was a weekly phonecall to his little shit of a sister, Max. After some time, even those became more rare.

Billy worked his ass off. He graduated from college and started his own career. He was a physical therapist and a personal trainer on the side. It was decent money; he wasn't worried about paying his bills, and he always had a little extra. He ended up adopting a pit bull from the animal shelter that was named Diesel. He also bought a house that was just down the road from his job. As far as his love life went,

he had some casual love affairs and a few almost-long-term partners but most of his relationships fizzled out pretty quickly. None of them really had the depth to last longer than six months, before Billy found himself bored or they wanted more commitment than he was willing to give.

A lot of time had passed, since his junior year. It had been years since Billy had thought of Hawkins or anyone from it.

Billy Hargrove was... satisfied with his life. He was content. He just felt like something was... missing. He didn't know exactly *what* was missing. It didn't stop him from being happy, but he just felt like he should be happier. He had his life down to a schedule. Wake up, feed his dog, go for a run, go to work, come home, go to sleep: rinse and repeat. He felt... almost stale. There was nothing *new*.

Billy was contemplating this feeling of listlessness while he was on his morning run. He looked up from his dog and the sand to make sure he wasn't going to run into anyone. It was a cloudy, Tuesday morning for California so the beach was empty. Well, except, in the distance, Billy could see a man laughing as he placed his toddlers feet in the water. The kid would scream in joy, and the man would pull him right back up. It was sweet.

The nearer he got to the two, Billy couldn't help but watch. It was heartwarming, and it made him wonder if he wanted kids as he watches the little boy squeal in joy and squirm happily in his father's arms. Maybe the loss he was feeling was really him longer for... kids? Billy briefly looks toward the father as he began to jog by.

He felt his feet trip over themselves as he sees a familiar head of silky brown hair. He stopped moving in shock, and Diesel, completely

unaware, yanked Billy into the ground. Billy hit the sand hard. He couldn't even find it in himself to sit up as his entire world takes a right hook and leave his head spinning. "Are you okay?!" That fucking voice. Jesus, he hadn't changed it a bit. Still such a mother hen.

Suddenly Steve's face centers over Billy's and he gasps as he looks down at him. "Billy Hargrove?! Is that you?" Billy can't help it, he smiles up at him, just a little. Even though he was covered head to toe in sand and a thin layer of sweat. "Hey... Stevie. It's uh... been a long time." Steve smiles, shaking his head in amazement as he holds out a hand to lift him up. Billy takes it, allowing himself to be pulled to his feet and into a tight hug. "Yeah. It has. I heard you moved back to Cali, but I didn't know if you'd stayed. This is crazy. What are the odds?"

Billy shakes his head, pulling away from the hug as he looks over Steve Harrington. He was older sure, a few more creases around his eyes, laugh lines a bit more pronounced but there was something else about him. Something Billy couldn't quite describe. Steve just had a WAY about him now. He was... different. Billy was different too. Whatever trance the two were in was broken when a small voice softly calls out from the ground. "Daddy?"

Steve quickly shook his head and grinned down at the boy at his feet, lifting him up and into his arms as the child giggled happily. "Sorry, sweetpea! Daddy didn't forget about you! This is Daddy's old friend Billy. I haven't seen him in a really long time. Billy this is my son, Isaiah." Steve's eyes had drifted back to Billy as he spoke, they were positively shining. Billy couldn't help but grin as he turned his attention to the boy in Steve's arms. He was probably about three with big beautiful eyes and a smile that had even Billy wanting to give in to anything he wanted. Isaiah was adorable... he just looked **nothing** like Steve. Billy grins at him anyway, reaching out to rub his little shoulder as he says "Hey there, little man! It's nice to meet

you!”

Isaiah grins at him, gasping as he sees Billy’s hulk of a dog come back over to the three. His eyes starting to sparkle as he softly gasps out “Pubby!” Billy grins, scratching Diesel behind the ear to get him to kick his leg, just to watch Isaiah laugh. “This big ole boy is Diesel. Had him for about two years now” Upon seeing the slight hesitation in Steve’s eyes he adds “There’s nothing to worry about. He’s a huge softie. He’s not even a dog, he’s just a teddy bear.” Steve smiles at that, placing Isaiah down in the sand where Diesel sniffs him twice before deciding he loves him and starts kissing the boy everywhere he could reach. Isaiah’s happy squeals filled the air as Billy and Steve sat side by side in the sand. “So uh... you’re a dad, huh? Are you, uh... married?” Steve snorts, quickly shaking his head. “Oh! No, I um... I adopted Isaiah last year. It’s just the two of us.”

Billy nodded, an odd sense of familiarity surrounding him as he sat side by side with Steve. “What about you?” Steve questioned, bright brown eyes locked onto Billy’s blue as he shakes his head. “Uh nope. Just uh me and Diesel. Why are you in Cali?”

Steve smiles and shrugged. “My work brought me out here. This is wild. I can’t believe **you’re** still here.” Billy laughs and shrugs at that. “California is home for me. Ocean waves run through my veins.” Steve grins at that, nudging their shoulders together. “Yeah. It always has.”

Just as Billy Was about to respond a text chimes through on his phone. He curses as he sees the time. “Oh damn. I’m gonna be late. It was really nice seeing you again. We should catch up sometime.” He could hardly wait for a response as he called Diesel to his side and took off jogging for his place. It was only after he got into the gym that he remember that he’d forgotten to get Steve’s number.

He cursed himself for an entire week.

3. You are the reason

Summary for the Chapter:

Billy has some...revelations.

Seeing Steve again had thrown Billy's life into a tailspin. Everything seemed empty, and he felt lost. He could barely sleep, he spent countless hours laying awake, staring at the ceiling.

Max had followed Billy back to Cali after she graduated school. It was nice having the only genuine family he had around... Well, that is when Max wasn't driving him absolutely insane. It was about a week after he'd met Steve on the beach and Billy couldn't stop thinking about him. He slammed his front door as he came in after work, growling at what he thought was just the empty, stale air of his living room.

Max snorts from her place on his couch, looking up from her phone to make fun of him. "What is it, big brother? You finally fed up with Jessica?" Jessica was one of his personal training clients... a real bitch, but she paid him well. Billy rolls his eyes, flopping down beside her on his couch as he pulls out his phone. "No. What are you even doing here?"

Max just shrugs, turning back to her phone. "I was bored. I missed you and I have nothing to do for like two hours." Billy groans, rolling his eyes again. "I regret giving you a key. You could've called." Max snorts. "What so I can break into your house again? And you wouldn't have answered. You like... never have your phone on you."

The two sat side by side for a while before Billy gets up with a stretch. "So. What do you want to eat?" Max shrugs him off. "I'm

good.” Billy blinks, staring down at his sister in mock horror. “Who are you and what have you done with my little sister? You haven’t turned down food... ever. What is happening? Are you pregnant? Did one of your boyfriends get you pregnant?” Max blinks before bursting out in laughter. “No! You fucking weirdo! I’m going to dinner so I don’t wanna eat. Plus me being pregnant would make me want *more* food, dumbass. Not less.”

Billy sighs and shakes his head. “Listen, you refusing food is fucking weird. I didn’t know what to think. Who are you going to dinner with?” He asked casually as he stepped into the kitchen and opened the fridge. He’d gotten as far as drinking out of his orange juice carton when Max replied, following him into the kitchen. “Oh, some old friends from Hawkins.”

Billy couldn’t help himself, he chokes. He coughs and sputters as he turns to his sister, eyes wide and filled with determination. “Who’s all going?” He spoke gruffly and with purpose. Max was too busy falling out of her chair with laughter to respond. It took a solid three minutes for Max to stop laughing enough to tell him it was just her little squad of nerds getting together for spring break. “Oh. Gotcha. Well, have fun I guess.” Max was unconvinced. “What’s the sudden interest in people from Hawkins, huh?”

Billy rolls his eyes. “I don’t have a ‘sudden interest’. I just haven’t thought about that hellscape in a long time. It shocked me is all.” Max raises an eyebrow, looking at him suspiciously. “Uh-huh. And this has nothing to do with... I dunno a lanky brunette that may or may not have been a fiery flame of yours in high school.” Billy groans, throwing his head back to glare at the ceiling of his house. This was his chance to get to see Steve again, and yet, he was hesitating. Would Steve even want to see him? What if he hated him? What if he calls him to ask for a date and it ends with Steve laughing in his face... Or worse... What if they go on a date just for it to end as nasty as it did that hot summer evening back in Hawkins? “Max? Can

we please not go there?”

Max jumps from her stool immediately. “I knew it! You still have feelings for him! Have you seen each other yet? Oh, my god! Should we go to his apartment right now?!” He was practically jumping, grinning so wide that Billy only felt his embarrassment grow and rage fills his chest. “Shut up! You don’t have any fucking idea what you’re talking about! If you’re gonna act like an idiot, then get out!”

Max was well-versed in his tantrums, so she paid him no heed. Billy’s anger slowly boiled down to an annoyed simmer as he glares at Max. He resigns himself to suffering in silence as Max goes on and on about the two of them meeting up and arranging a date for them. Billy finally turns to her, feeling upset and annoyed. “Listen, Max. He’s not gonna want to go on a date with me. We ended on some pretty rough terms and... I don’t know. It’s just... weird. I don’t want to like... drag him into my shit.”

Max lets out the most annoyed sound Billy had ever heard her utter. “Oh, my god you’re an actual child! How can you be so goddamn melodramatic!” Billy snorts, laughing as he shakes his head. “It’s all the *trauma*, Max.” She laughs at that, rolling her eyes as Billy changes the subject.

Steve didn’t come up again until Max was leaving to go to dinner. “Are you sure you won’t ask him out? Just one date! What could one date hurt?” Billy sighs and rolls his eyes as he walks with her to the door. “My pride, Maxine. It could lethally wound my pride.” She groans as she goes outside, turning to look at him on his porch. “Your pride sucks.”

Billy laughs and shakes his head. “Yeah, well, so do you. See ya later,

kiddo. Be careful.” Max turns back toward her car. “Yeah, Yeah. Love you, bro. See you later.”

Billy heads back inside his house to deal with all the memories the thought of Steve Harrington brought back. He sighs, heading to the shower to wash away the memories of Steve’s laugh and his smile. The sticky sweet way he kissed Billy and made his heart pump like he was running a marathon.

Once he was under the hot trickle of water, his thoughts turned perverse. He couldn’t help it. Even after all these years, Billy remembered how good Steve felt under him. The noises he would make, the way his body arched and tensed. The shaking of Steve’s beautiful thighs when Billy refused to let him cum until he was crying. It was years ago, and yet the thought of fucking Steve again had his cock filling out and his hand traveling downward. A sigh escapes him as his hand presses right above his dick, teasing himself to the images of Steve replaying in his mind.

Billy slowly takes himself into his palm. He strokes himself, replaying the last time he had sex with Steve over in his head until he came. After he came, the feeling of depression sank in. He’d never have that again. He’d never have Steve again and know that fucking hurt.

He stayed in his shower until the water ran cold, curling up in his bed with Diesel right behind him, laying across Billy’s feet as he sighs and turns on some music. Billy sunk deeper into his sadness, replaying all of his failed romantic escapades. Each person he had tried to love ended in coldness and bitterness. His thoughts quickly became self-deprecating. He was unloveable. Destined to feel alone and lost for the rest of his life. He was too much like his father, and he would always break the hearts of the people he wanted to care about the most.

He had been crying by the time he analyzed his past relationships. As he did, he noticed that subconsciously he had been comparing all of his partners... Comparing all of them to Steve. None of them remotely held up to what Steve had given him, and the relationships fizzled fast. The excuse Billy gave most of the time was that they wanted different things. Yeah... That was too true. His partner wanted Billy, and Billy wanted... Steve.

Billy sobbed into his pillow, anguish, and anger filling him at the revelation. He hardly ever understood how he truly feels, and now... He understands far too late. His chance with Steve had long gone down the drain and Billy felt like his chance for true happiness went with it.

Across town, Max was sitting with her group of old friends. Jane, Mike, Will, Dustin, and Lucas were all sitting around a table at her favorite beach bar enjoying their dinner when Max looks toward Dustin. "Alright. I have a very important question, Dusty. You know Steve like the back of your hand. What's his love life looking like?"

Dustin snorts. "As vacant and empty as the Sahara Desert. Why do you ask?" Max grins, leaning in as she speaks. "Did you know that Billy and Steve dated during Billy's Junior year?" Dustin, unfortunately, had been taking a drink at that exact moment. He chokes, pulling away from his glass and hacking up a lung. "THEY DID WHAT? HOW THE HELL AM I JUST NOW FINDING OUT ABOUT THIS?" He screams out, every eye in the building turning toward them as Max bursts into laughter.

“Yeah, and it was like... pretty serious. I mean like for a really long time I just thought of it as one of those high school flings, but they were together for like a year and a half. I honestly think Billy still has feelings for him.” Dustin lets out a surprised noise as he leans back in his chair and thinks. “Really? I mean... I remember how miserable Steve was his first year of college, but I thought it was all like... homesickness and junk. Damn... What if he was all shitty about Billy? Why’d they split up?”

Max shrugs, sighing as she sips at her beer. “I don’t have a clue. Billy never spoke about it. Still won’t. I mentioned we were all going to dinner, and he immediately asked if Steve was coming. I just... I think we should try to get them together. Billy is so fucking stubborn, though he wouldn’t accept me like giving him his number or anything.”

Dustin groans as he looks up at the sky. “So is Steve. Wait... What if we like... make plans with them separately and then when they show up we like... ditch them... Is that horrible? I mean...” Max laughs, grinning mischievously as the two hatch a plan to get their older brothers together again. Dustin sighs as they came to the close of the conversation. “I’m not like... super protective anymore, but your brother isn’t still the huge, angry asshole he was in high school, right?”

Max nods, smiling sadly. “Yeah. He’s definitely not like that anymore. He was... going through a lot back then. More than even I know, and I fucking lived with the dude, but he’s matured a lot. He’s a good guy. I’m really proud of him.” Dustin nods. “Alright. I’ll trust you, but if he breaks Steve’s heart, I’m legally going to have no choice but to murder you both.”

Max nods, deadly serious. “Absolutely. I would expect nothing less.”

The day the two planned on getting Steve and Billy together worked out tremendously. The plan going on without a hitch. Billy and Max had spent the better part of the day at the mall and now they were walking down the beach, talking and laughing with each other. Max suddenly demands that they go to the boardwalk. Billy scrunches his nose in distaste at the thought. "Ew, Max, that is like total tourist shit. Why would go there?"

Max rolls her eyes. "Because I want to! Why does it matter? There're cool games and shit! C'mon! Let's go! Please?" She pulls out her puppy dog eyes and Billy groans as she wins him over. "Fine. Only for a little while." Max fist pumps, grinning as they walk in the boardwalk's direction. "Yes!"

As they approached the boardwalk, Billy heard a very familiar laugh, and he fell still. He was in shock, watching Steve Harrington laughing along to something Dustin had said. He was in awe, staring at how beautiful Steve looked, smiling and having a good time. Suddenly they both made eye contact and Steve's smile softened a bit, blush dusting his cheeks as he looks away.

Max took it upon herself to make a scene. "OH MY GOD. BILLY LOOK ITS STEVE AND DUSTIN. HI GUYS." Dustin grins, grabbing Steve's arm and hauling him over to the two. "Oh, my god! It's Max and Billy! Look, Steve! Wow!" Max couldn't help laughing and Billy groans. "Did you two really plan this?" Max shrugs, linking arms with Dustin. "Maybe. Bye. Have fun!" She calls as she drags a waving Dustin away down the boardwalk. Leaving Billy alone with Steve...

Billy's anxiety quickly raised, and he feels his stomach drop to his feet. He bites his lip as he watches his little sister leaving him behind with his ex-boyfriend.

Billy gulped, finally getting the guts to turn to the man beside him.
“H-Hey Stevie.”

4. Everything I wanted

Steve turns to Billy, letting out an anxious sigh as he rubs the back of his neck. “H-hey Bills... Little siblings... am I right?” Billy laughs awkwardly, nodding his head. “Uh... Yeah. Well, um... Have you been here before?” Steve shakes his head, that light blush making another appearance as he takes another step away from him. “Uh no... but um, I uh... Don’t know if I’m comfortable with this Billy...”

Billy's sheepish smile drops off his face as he looks down at his shoes, swallowing hard. “Oh... uh right... um, We didn’t really... leave with the best of terms, huh?” Billy could feel himself tripping over his words and he knew that wasn’t the best thing to say either. He looks up long enough to see Steve’s soft brown doe eyes alight with rage and he clenches his jaw, preparing himself for a fight. “Yeah, Billy. I wouldn’t call our break up, That left me emotionally scarred for um I dunno- Years. or you abandoning me on the beach when we finally saw each other for the first time in years the best of terms.” His words were harsh, covered in an angry venom.

Billy sighs, nodding as he feels his eyes sting as his throat tighten. “I know... I kn-know, Princess.” Steve growls and snaps out at him. “Don’t fucking call me that. You lost the right to call me that a long fucking time ago, Hargrove.” Billy nods quickly, eyes snapping down to his shoes. He was fucking it up again, he knew that. He just didn’t know how to make it any better.

“I’m sorry. It slipped. I didn’t mean to call you that and I just... I don’t... I didn’t put Max up to this and I ne-never meant..to let thi-things get s-so... I-I... I’m s-sorry. That’s a-a-all I can say.” Billy stutters his way through it. He knew his face was red, knew a tear was streaming down his cheek, and it pissed him off. He didn’t want to do this here. He didn’t want to have this conversation in front of all these people. He couldn’t look up, couldn’t meet Steve’s eyes as he

feels him awkwardly shift in front of him. He couldn't tell if people were actually staring at the two or if it was just his anxiety.

"Right. Look, I don't know if I can forgive you... At least not right now. I'm... angry and..." Steve sighs and Billy looks up slightly, notices the grim look of acceptance on Steve's pretty face as he runs a hand down his face before he turns back to him. "But I do know, I'm not dating you. We might be friends someday, but... that's gonna be it, Hargrove." Billy nods quickly. "Right. Right um... that's... Okay." He looks back down, the familiar feeling sinking in again. He really didn't want to have a panic attack right here, in front of Steve, but fuck it felt like he was in front of Neil and that shit sucked. Did he make Steve feel like this? God, he hopes not. Steve steps away from him completely. "I'll um. See you. I guess." Billy just nods again, turning back the way he came and walking off toward his car.

Billy thought he hated the boardwalk before... he really hates it now. Billy fucking hates the boardwalk. The walk back to his car felt like it was miles long and in the safety of his Camaro, he felt himself break down, shuttering gasps rolling through his body as he grips the steering wheel tightly. The words he screamed at Steve that night coming back to haunt him. Neil's words hissed in his ear and his hands wrapped around his throat. His hands come up to pull his hair as he screams at himself. Pull it together, Hargrove! No one cares about your punk ass, just let it go!

It only made things worse... but he eventually calmed down enough to drive home. He went directly into the shower, didn't bother taking off his clothes as he hugged himself and sat on the floor of his shower, trying not to cry. Flashbacks overtook him and he disassociated for a while. When he finally came back to himself, Diesel was there, letting himself get soaked in the cold water with Billy as he laid his head in his lap.

Billy sniffs, smiling softly down at his dog as he pets him. He hears Max come in, calling for him. She sighs in relief finding the two of them in the bathroom, Billy couldn't look up at her, softly asking her to leave. "No, Billy... I'm not leaving you alone right now. This is all my fault. Fuck, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have... Ugh. I just... I thought. I'm really sorry. I shouldn't have meddled." She sat in front of him, Diesel huffs and moves out of the shower, shaking the water off his body and moving to sit beside the dry Maxine.

Billy scoffs, sniffing as he leans up and turns off the water. "Yeah right, it's not your fault I'm an asshole, Max." Max glares at him. "You're not, Billy. You're not the same person you were in high school. I just... I see how great you are! I see how much you changed and I thought... I thought Steve might..." Billy felt tears prick his eyes, streaming down his cheeks. He couldn't tell if he was mad or sad or what the fuck he felt. He hits his head back against the shower tile as he growls out. "I never even apologized, Max! I'm the fucking worst! The fu-fucking shit I-I sa-said... and I nev-never even tol-told him how s-sorry I w-was." He hits his head off the tile again, crying heavily now, Max moves over to him, pulling him into her arms. "Stop! Jackass! You'll hurt yourself!"

Billy snorts. "Yeah. I could only hope." Max squeezes him tightly. "Don't you fucking say that, Billy." Billy just sighs, nodding into her shoulder.

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Billy didn't feel like himself for days, felt miserable and depressed for weeks. He just stuck to himself, tried to avoid Max, who kept trying to apologize to him for something that wasn't even her fault. He thought about Steve often. He didn't want to, but soft brown eyes haunted his memories.

He was still thinking about Steve when his hospital was holding its yearly fundraisers. There were about two weeks of events the staff organized to get community participation and to raise some funds for newer equipment and help some of their patients with the bills. Billy loved this time of year. He always had a lot of fun. Sure, the fundraisers were stressful as hell, but watching kids enjoy themselves and his patients get motivated to move and play by themselves meant a lot.

That weekend the hospital had reserved the city park, and there was a huge fundraiser; A bake sale, a yard sale, and a potluck. They held all three events along with face painting for the kids and live music throughout the day. People came out from the community and set up their own booths. It had turned into a festival by the time it had started. Billy had been awake since five in the morning helping everyone set up and being in charge of the bake sale for most of the day. He switched out with Kary, a neurosurgeon that had had a crush on Billy since he'd started working with them, and he headed to the face painting station. He was painting a butterfly on a little girl's cheek, laughing with her as she told him a joke.

He heard a groan and an exasperated "Isaiah! Come back here!" Billy looked up in time to see a little two-year-old trying to sprint past his station. He fluidly got up and grabbed the little guy before he got in the road, tickling him as he squealed. "Gotcha, kiddo!" He laughed as he turned to hand the child back to his parent, gulping slightly as he's met with a bright-faced Steve. "Oh Hey! uh... Here's your son..." He awkwardly rubs the back of his neck as he hands him over. Steve sighs in relief, lightly scolding him as he kisses all over his face, turning back to Billy with a smile. "Thank you... Um... for that." Isaiah suddenly gasps as he sees Billy surrounded by all the face paints. "Daddy! Daddy! Wanna!" He said as he tugged at Steve's shirt and pointed at Billy and his array of face paints.

Steve blushes as he looks at Billy. "Okay, baby. If he says you can." Billy grins and nods. "Course kiddo. What do you want?" He shows Isaiah a picture of all the drawings he could choose as Steve sat him back down on the ground and he runs over. He climbs right into Billy's lap and Steve sputters, trying to apologize, but Billy just smiles and hugs the cute kid closer to himself, grinning up at Steve and offering the seat beside him as Isaiah chooses a whole face of paint that resembled a tiger.

Billy chuckles, "Okay... that might take a while. Think you can sit still long enough?" Isaiah quickly nods, a determined pout on his face as Billy turns him around to face him. Isaiah giggles as the cool paint touches his skin and the brush tickles his cheek. Billy smiles down at him as he paints. "Did you know that my favorite animal is a tiger?" He asks as Isaiah gasps softly, looking up at him with adorable wide eyes. "R-Really?! Mine too!" Billy chuckles and grins. "Yeah! Only the coolest people like tigers the best." Isaiah grins up at him, eyes sparkling. Billy remembered back to a time when Steve would call him tiger... It only became his favorite animal after that...

It was like Billy had opened a floodgate, Isaiah talked about anything and everything as Billy listened, painted, and laughed along. Steve sat with them, smiling at his son. He turned to Billy with a tilted head. "So, um... you work at the hospital?" Billy nodded, grinning. He was always glad to talk about his work. His patients always filled him with a sense of pride. "Yeah! I'm a physical therapist. I work mostly with kids and teens." Steve hums, looking over Billy as he gently painted his son's face. Billy clears his throat a little, suddenly nervous. "So um... what about you?" Steve smiles and shrugs. "Oh, I'm in social work... that's actually how I ended up adopting Isaiah. I was his caseworker."

Billy looks over at Steve, watching him from the corner of his eye for a second as he nods. "Hard work... I'm glad those kids have someone like you looking out for you though." He says after a moment, he

meant it. He had a few run-ins with DHS when he was a kid and living with Neil. They never got anything to stick, and Billy feared his father too much, to tell the truth. He might've said something though if Steve would've been his caseworker.

When Billy finally finished, Isaiah took his father's hand and then tugged on Billy's looking up at him with the cutest little pout on his face. "let's go get cotton candy?" Billy blushes looking at Steve who bit his lip. "Oh, honey, I think Billy might have to stay here and keep painting." Isaiah's bottom lip trembled and his enormous eyes quickly filled with tears. Billy shook his head. "I can take a break. If it's okay with you?" He looked up at Steve, who nodded quickly, wanting to avoid a crying Isaiah if possible.

Billy smiled, taking Isaiah's hand, the two swinging him a little as they walked to hear him squeal and laugh with glee. Billy bought the two some cotton candy and funnel cakes. The three sitting down to eat. Billy swallows down the lump that had formed in his throat enough to say. "Um... about the other day. I'm really sorry. It wasn't appropriate and I should've handled it better." "No! I should be the one apologizing. I was just so angry and-" "No! Really, Steve. I mean it. I'm really sorry." He looked Steve in the eye, unwavering and letting himself be honest and open. "About all of it. Everything. I'm really sorry and I know I can't... I can't change it or turn back time or..." He lets out a sigh, unable to find the words again. "I just... I'm sorry and I'd really like to make it up to you one day if you'd let me."

Steve's smile is small and soft when he nods. "Okay, Bills..."